

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A SERIAL STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP."

### BOOK II.

#### CHAPTER IX. SUCCESS ACHIEVED.

THE step which Mr. Creswell took in asking Marian Ashurst to become his wife was not taken without due care and consideration. As, during a lifetime which had now exceeded half a century, he had been accustomed to ponder over, sift, and weigh the most minor details of even trivial schemes before carrying them out, it was not likely that he would give less attention to a plan, on the successful or unsuccessful result of which his whole hope of future earthly happiness or misery might be based. The plan presented itself to him squarely and from a business-like point of view, like all other plans which he entertained, and had two aspects—as to how it would affect himself and how it would affect others. He took it under the first aspect, and thought it out carefully. His was a loving nature, always desiring something to cherish and cling to. In bygone years he had had his wife, whom he had worshipped with all the warmth of his loving nature. She had been the sharer of his struggles, but it had not been permitted to her to take part in his success; doubtless for the best, for Mr. Creswell, like all men who have been thoroughly successful, and with whom everything has gone straight, had perfect trust and reliance on the dispensations of Providence, she had been removed before his position was acquired. But she had left behind her a son for whom that position was destined, for whom his father slaved for years, adding to his wealth and establishing his name, all the while hoping against hope that the boy might one

day learn how to use the former and how to maintain the latter. As the lad grew up, and year by year showed his real nature more and more, so the hope grew fainter and fainter in the father's heart, until it was finally extinguished by Tom's death. And then he had no hope left in the world, or rather he would have had none had it not been for Marian. It seemed as though matters had been providentially arranged, Mr. Creswell thought. The dependent state of Marian and her mother, his power of assisting them, their being domiciled under his roof, which had given him such opportunity of studying Marian's character, and had so entirely reversed his original opinion of her, the assistance and support she had afforded him during that sad period of poor Tom's death. All seemed predestined and pre-arranged. He knew her now. It was not like taking a girl with whom his acquaintance had been slight, or even one whom he might have thought he knew intimately, but whom he had only seen on her society behaviour, or in such guise as she would naturally affect before any one whom she knew to be noticing her with an object. He had seen Marian Ashurst under all circumstances, and in all places. Under the strongest and hardest trial he had always seen her come out brightest and best, and he had had full opportunity of observing the sterling worth of her character. Was the end of all his life of toil and strife to be an unloved and unloving old age? Was the position which he had acquired to benefit no one but himself, and to die out with him? Was the wealth which he had amassed to be filtered away into dirty channels, or left for the benefit of charities? If these questions were to be answered in the negative, where could he find such a helpmate as Marian, where

could he dream of looking for such another? His conduct could scarcely be characterised as selfish, he thought, if after the life of work and anxiety which he had passed, he tried to render its latter portion peaceful and happy, and that, he felt, was only to be done by his marriage with Marian.

So much for himself, but how would it affect others. Marian, first? Mr. Creswell was so true and so honourable a man that even in a case like the present, where the interest of his future was at stake, he would not have used an argument, in the firm basis of which he did not himself believe. In pleading his cause to Marian, he had somewhat enlarged upon the responsibility laid on her in regard to her mother—responsibility which, he argued, would be considerably lightened, if not entirely removed, by her acceptance of the position which he offered her. He believed this firmly, setting it down as an undoubted gain to Marian, who would also have position, wealth, a home, and a protector. What on the other side—what, as they said in business, *per contra*—what would she lose? He hoped, nothing. To many girls, to most girls, a husband old enough to be their father would have been in the highest degree objectionable; but Marian was so different to any girls he had ever seen. She was so staid, so decorous, so old-fashioned; her life had been one of such quietude and earnestness; she had always been associated with people so much older than herself. And then she had never had any love-affair! Mr. Creswell thanked Heaven for that! He could not fancy anything worse than playing the part of Auld Robin Gray in the ballad, and being received and accepted for the sake of his money, and more than that, causing the rejection of a poorer suitor! That would be too dreadful! No! Marian had not been thrown in the way of that kind of thing; her father had neither entertained company nor taken her into society, and there was no one in the village, Mr. Creswell thought with a grave smile, who would have ventured to uplift his eyes towards her. He should not expect from her any romantic worship, any girlish devotion, but, at all events, she would come to him heart-whole, without any remains of previous attachments or by-gone passions.

Who else would be affected by this marriage? His nieces. At least, so the world would think and say, but he should take care that the world was wrong. On the

contrary, if anybody rather benefited by the step he was about to take, it should be those girls; principally because they were the persons who would be selected for the world's pity, and also because, he could not tell why, he rather disliked them. It was very wrong, he knew, and he had often reasoned with himself and struggled hard against it, but the result was always the same. They were no companions for him. He had tried very hard to make himself feel interested in them, but, beyond his natural kinsman interest and compassion for their forlorn state of orphanage, without effect. He had examined himself as to the cause of this want of interest, and had explained to himself that they were "frivolous;" by which he meant that they had no notions of business, of money, of responsibility, of the various items which make up the serious side of life. All those qualities which made up the charms of Marian Ashurst were wanting in these girls. In reality they were not in the least frivolous; they were far better educated and informed than most young ladies of their class, and one of them, Maud, had superior natural gifts. But they were not after their uncle's bent, and he could not make them so. That, however, was the exact reason why a man with such a keen sense of honour as Mr. Creswell should treat them with even extra consideration, and should be more than ever cautious that no such proceeding as his marriage should injure them in any possible way. He thought it was due to the girls, as well as advisable for many reasons, that they should be made acquainted with the forthcoming change as speedily as possible, and he took an opportunity of saying so to Marian on the Sunday evening. Marian quite agreed with him. She had never been enthusiastic on the subject of the girls, and she did not pretend to be now.

"It would only be right that they should know it at once!" she said. "I had rather, if you please, that you should tell them! It will come from you better than from me! I suppose I shall get on very well with them!"

"Get on very well with them!" repeated Mr. Creswell. "With the girls? Why of course you will, dearest. What reason could there be why you should not get on with them?"

"Oh, none in the least!—of course not! It was a silly remark of mine!"

Mr. Creswell knew that she never made silly remarks; one of his avowed boasts

about her was, that she never spoke without thinking, and always spoke at the right time. He felt a little uncomfortable therefore, and dropped the subject, saying, "I will tell them, then, to-morrow morning. Did you speak to Mrs. Ashurst?"

"I did!"

"And she——?"

"She is almost as happy as her daughter, at the thought! Is that sufficient?"

"God bless her!" said Mr. Creswell. "Her comfort shall be our first care! Ah, Marian, you are an angel!" And Marian thought it mattered very little how the young ladies might receive the announcement of their uncle's intended marriage, so long as their uncle held that last expressed opinion.

The next morning, while the young ladies were at their music practice, they received a message that their uncle wished to see them. It was not meant to be a formal message, but it certainly smacked somewhat of formality. Hitherto, whenever their uncle wanted them, he had been in the habit of either coming to their room, or of calling them to him. Maud looked astonished at the solemnity of the phrase "wishes to see you" as the servant delivered it, while Gertrude raised her eyebrows at her sister, and audibly wondered what it meant.

They found their uncle seated in his library, the desk before him as usual heaped with papers and accounts, and plenty of Miss Ashurst's handwriting, so horribly neat and so painfully legible, as Gertrude described it, to be seen everywhere. Mr. Creswell rose as they entered, and received them with all his usual kindness; Maud thought his manner was a little flurried and his face a little pale, but she could not gather from anything she saw the reason of their summons. Gertrude had made up her mind that somebody, she did not know who, had proposed for Maud; but then she could not see why she was required to be present at the announcement.

There was rather an uncomfortable hitch in the proceedings at first, Mr. Creswell obviously finding it difficult to touch upon the topic which he had to treat, and the girls having no topic to touch upon. At length, Maud broke the silence by saying, "You sent for us, uncle! You wished to see us!"

"Yes, my dears—yes, girls, I wanted to see you, and I asked the servant to beg you to step here, as I had something special that I wanted to say to you, for you know, my dear children, that since you

came to live with me, I have always treated you as if you were my daughters—at least, I hope I have; it has been my wish to do so!"

"You always have done so, uncle!" said Maud, decisively.

"Always, uncle!" echoed Gertrude, who was best as chorus.

"That's right, my dears. I'm glad you've found it so, as I intended it. So long as I live you will find that you will be treated in the same way, and I have made such provision for you in my will as I would have made for my own daughters, if it had pleased God to give me any. Having told you this, it's right that I should tell you of something which is going to happen in this house, though it won't make any difference in your position, nor any difference to you at all that I know of, but yet it's right you should be made acquainted with it. I'm—I'm going to be married!"

There was a pause for an instant, and then it was Gertrude spoke.

"To be married!" she said. "You going to be married! Oh, uncle, I know to whom! I'm sure I can guess!"

"Guess, then, my dear," said Mr. Creswell.

"To dear old Mrs. Ashurst, isn't it?" cried Gertrude. "I'm sure it is! She is the very kindest, sweetest old thing! and if she only had better health—I'm right, uncle, am I not?—it is Mrs. Ashurst!"

"No, my dear," said Mr. Creswell, with hesitating voice and glowing cheeks—"no, my dear, it's not Mrs. Ashurst!"

"Ah, then, it's some one you have met away from Woolgreaves, away from the neighbourhood, some one we don't know!"

"No, indeed!" said Mr. Creswell, "it is some one you know very well, and I hope love very much. It is Marian—Miss Ashurst."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Gertrude.

"I wish you all happiness, dear uncle," said Maud, rising from her seat, crossing to her uncle, and bending down to kiss him as he sat.

"So do I, dear uncle," said Gertrude, following her sister.

"Thank you, my dears," said Mr. Creswell; "thank you very much. I said before, that nothing should make any difference in your position here, nor in my intentions for the future—nor will it. Besides, it isn't as if it were a stranger—you've known Marian so long——"

"Oh yes, we've known Miss Ashurst for some time!" said Maud, with emphasis.

"Exactly!" said Mr. Creswell. "As I say, it isn't as if it were a stranger! Marian has been domiciled with us now for some time, and there is no reason why, so far as you and she are concerned, things should not go on exactly as they have done! At least, I know this to be her wish and mine!" he added, after a short pause.

"Whatever is your wish, uncle, I'm sure Gertrude and I will be delighted to fulfil—"

"Delighted!" interposed Gertrude.

"And I don't think Miss Ashurst will find us give her any trouble!"

"Miss Ashurst! Why not speak of her as Marian, my dear?" said Mr. Creswell.

"She has always been Miss Ashurst to me hitherto, and you know I'm not going to marry her, uncle!" said Maud, almost brusquely.

"What do you think of Miss A. now?" said Gertrude, when the girls were back in their room. "I used to laugh about her being superior! But she has shown herself superior to us with a vengeance! Fancy having her for an aunt, and having to ask her permission to do this and that, and go here and there! Oh my! Why don't you speak, Maud—why don't you say something about all this?"

"Because I can't trust myself to speak," said Maud, hurriedly. "Because I'm afraid of blurting out something that were better left unsaid."

"Oh, then, you're not so pleased at the connexion! I'm sure by the way in which you wished your uncle happiness, one would have thought that the dearest wish of your heart had been realised. What do you think of Miss A.'s conduct, I mean as regards this matter?"

"Just what I think of it, and have always thought of it as regards every other matter, that it is selfish, base, and deceitful. That woman came here with a predetermined plan of marrying uncle, and chance has helped her to carry it into effect, even more quickly than she anticipated. Tom saw that, he told us so, if you recollect. Poor Tom! he was a dull, unpleasant lad, but he was wonderfully shrewd, and he saw through this woman's tactics in a minute, and determined to spoil them. He would have done so, had he lived, and now, I've no doubt that the very fact of his death has been the means of hurrying uncle into taking this step!"

"Do you think Miss A. cares for uncle, Maud?"

"Cares for him—what do you mean?"

"Well, of course, I don't mean to be awfully fond, and all that sort of thing, like lovers, you know, and all that! What do you think she—well, she's fond of him?"

"Of him? No! she's fond of his name and his position, his money and his influence! She's fond of Woolgreaves, she has become accustomed to its comforts, and she does not choose to give them up!"

"I don't know that Miss A. is to be particularly pitched into for that, Maud," said Gertrude. "I think, perhaps, we ought to look at home before making any such suggestions! We have become accustomed to the comforts of Woolgreaves, and we—at least I—should be uncommonly sorry to give them up!"

"Well, but we have some claim to them; at all events we are of uncle's blood, and did not come here designedly, with a view to establish ourselves here, as I'm certain this woman did! And when you talk of our not giving up our present life—look to it!"

"Look, Maud! what do you mean?"

"What do I mean! That we shall have to change our lives very quickly! You don't suppose Marian Ashurst is going to live her life with us as constant reminders to her of what was? You don't suppose that we—that I, at least, am going to waste my life with her as my rock ahead—not I, indeed!"

"Well, Maud," said Gertrude, quietly, "I don't suppose anything about anything! I never do. What you propose I shall agree to, and that's all I know or all I care for!"

It was Marian's wish that the marriage should be delayed for some little time, but Mr. Creswell was of the opposite advice, and thought it would be better to have the ceremony as soon as possible. "Life is very short, Marian," he said, "and I am too old to think of deferring my happiness. I am looking to you as my wife to brighten and soothe the rest of my days, and I am selfish enough to grudge every one of them until you are in that position! It is all very well for young people to have their term of courtship and engagement, and all the rest of it, but you are going to throw yourself away on an old man, dear one," and he smiled fondly and patted her cheek, "and you must be content to dispense with that, and come to him at once!"

"Content is not the word to express my feelings and wishes in the matter!" said Marian; "only I thought that—after



Tom's death, so soon I mean—people might say that it would have been better to have waited till——”

“My dearest child, no waiting would restore my poor boy to me; and I look to you to fill the void in my heart which his loss has made! As for people talking, I have lived too long, child, to pay the slightest heed to what they say! If such gossip moved me one jot, it would rather strengthen my wish to hasten our marriage, as it supplies me with an argument which you evidently have not perceived——”

“And that is?——”

“And that is, that, you may depend upon it, these sticklers for the proprieties and conventionalities, these worshippers of Mrs. Grundy, will be very much interested in our movements, and highly scandalised if, under these fresh circumstances which they have just learned, you remain an inmate of my house! What has been perfectly right and decorous for the last few months would be highly improper for the next few weeks, according to their miserable doctrine! I should not have named this to you, Marian, had not the conversation taken this turn; nor even then, had you been a silly girl and likely to be influenced by such nonsense. However much you might wish to go away and live elsewhere until our marriage, you cannot. Your mother's state of health precludes any possibility of her removal, and therefore the only thing for us to do is to get the marriage over as quickly as possible, and thus effectually silence Mrs. Grundy's disciples!”

“Very well!” said Marian. “I suppose for the same reason it will be better that the wedding should be here?”

“Here? Why, my dearest Marian, where would you wish it to be?”

“Oh, I should like us to go away to some quiet little place where we were neither of us known, and just walk into the church——”

“And just smuggle through the ceremony and slip away, so that no one should see you were marrying a man old enough to be your father! Is that it, pet? I ought to feel highly complimented, and——”

“Please, not even in joke! No, no; you know what I mean. I cannot explain it, but——”

“I know exactly, darling, but we can't help it. If you wish it the wedding shall be perfectly quiet, only just ourselves, but it must take place here, and I don't surmise our good neighbours would let it pass off without some demonstration of their regard,

whatever we might say to them! By the way, I mentioned it to the girls this morning!”

“And what did they say?” Marian asked, with, for her, rather unusual eagerness. “Or rather, what did Maud say, for Gertrude, of course, merely echoed her sister?”

“Poor Gerty!” said Mr. Creswell, smiling; “hitherto she has not displayed much originality. Oh, Maud was very affectionate indeed, came over and kissed me, and wished me all happiness. And, as you say, of course, Gertrude did, and said, ditto! Have they—have they said anything to you?”

“Not a word! I have scarcely seen them since yesterday.”

“Ah! they'll take an opportunity of coming to you. I know they are delighted at anything which they think will conduce to my happiness!”

“Perhaps they don't think that your marrying me will have that effect?” said Marian, with a half smile.

“‘Please, not even in joke!’ it is my turn to say that now!” said Mr. Creswell.

It was a perfect godsend to the people of Helmingham, this news, and coming so soon too—a few months interval was comparatively nothing in the village—after the excitement caused by young Tom's death. They had never had the remotest idea that Mr. Creswell would ever take to himself a second wife; they had long since given up the idea of speculating upon Marian Ashurst's marriage prospects, and the announcement was almost too much for them to comprehend. Generally, the feeling was one of satisfaction, for the old schoolmaster and Mrs. Ashurst had both been popular in the village, and there had been much commiseration, expressed with more warmth and honesty than good taste, when it was murmured that the widow and Marian would have to give up housekeeping—an overwhelming degradation in the Helmingham mind—and go into lodgings. A little alloy might have existed, in the fact that no new element would be brought into their society, no stranger making her first appearance as the “squire's lady,” to be stared at on her first Sunday in church, and discussed and talked over, after her first round of visits. But this disappointment was made up to Mrs. Croke, and Mrs. Whicher, and others of their set, by the triumph and vindication of their own perspicuity and appreciation of character.

They appealed to each other, and to a sympathising audience round a tea-table specially spread, directly authentic confirmation of the news of the intended marriage was received, whether they had not always said that, "That girl's heart was set on money!" That it would take some one "wi' pounds an' pounds!" to win her, and they had proved right, and she were now going to be made mistress of Woolgreaves, eh? Money enough there, as Mrs. Whicher told Mrs. M'Shaw, to satisfy even her longing for riches. "But it's not all goold that glitters," said the thrifty housewife; "and it's not all sunshine even then. There's givin' up liberty, and such like, to who? It 'minds me of the story of a man as cam' to market wi' a cart-load o' cheeses and grindstones. The cheeses was that beautiful that every one wanted they, but no one bought the grindstones; so seein' this the man, who were from where your husband comes from, Mrs. M'Shaw, the north, he said, he wouldn't sell 'ere a cheese unless they bought a grindstone at the same time, and so he cleared off the lot! I'm thinkin' that wi' Marian Ashurst the money's the cheese, but she can't take that wi'out the old man, the grindstone!" Scarcely anything was said about the singularity of the circumstance that a pretty girl like Marian had not had any lovers. Mrs. Croke remarked that once she thought there would be "something between" Marian and "that young Joyce," but she was promptly put down; Mrs. Whicher observing, scornfully, that a girl with Marian's notions of money wasn't likely to have "taken up wi' an usher;" and Mrs. Baker, little Sam's mother, declaring it would have been an awful thing, if true, as she was given to understand that young Joyce had "leff' for a soldier," and the last thing heard of him was that he had actually 'listed.

The wedding-day arrived, to Marian's intense relief. She had been haunted by an odd feeling that Walter Joyce might even come to see her, or, at all events, might write to her, either to induce her to change her resolution or to upbraid her with her perfidy. But he had made no sign, and there was no chance of his doing so now. She was perfectly calm and composed, had steadily contemplated her future, and had made up her mind as to her intended disposal of various persons so soon as she commenced her new path in life. That would not be just yet; they were going away for a fortnight to the seaside, Mrs. Ashurst being left to the care of the girls,

who were delighted at the charge. Maud and Gertrude were to be bridesmaids, and no one else was to be officially present at the ceremony save Dr. Osborne, who, as Marian's oldest friend, was to give her away. The little doctor was in the greatest delight at the match, which he looked upon as being somewhat of his own making, though he thought it the best joke in the world to rally Marian by telling her that "her housekeeper project was a much better one than his! He had only thought Mrs. Ashurst might succeed Mrs. Caddy, for a little time, but by George! little Marian all the time intended to make herself head of the house for life!" The villagers, however, were not to be baulked of their ceremonial, the bells were rung, general holiday was made, and Marian Creswell, leaning on her husband's arm, walked from the church on flowers strewn on the path, by the girls who a few years before had been her school-fellows.

"What an incongruous time for such a letter to arrive!" said Mr. Creswell to Marian, as they were waiting for the carriage to drive to the railway, handing her a paper. She took it, and read:

"DEAR SIR,—General E. will be about six weeks hence. Please be prepared. We calculate on you for B.

"Yours truly,  
"J. GOULD."

"I can't understand it," said Marian. "Who is General E., and where will he be about six weeks hence? Why are you to be prepared, and what is B. that they calculate on you for?"

"General E.," said Mr. Creswell, laughing, "is the general election, and B. is Brocksopp, for which borough I've promised to stand. However, there's enough of that now! My darling, I hope you will never regret this day!"

"I am certain I shall not!" she replied, quite calmly.

#### ROBERT KEELEY.

"THERE is something strange as well as sad in seeing actors—your pleasant fellows particularly—subjected to and suffering the common lot; their fortunes, their casualties, their deaths, seem to belong to the scene; their actions to be amenable to poetic justice only. We can hardly connect them with more awful responsibilities."

So wrote the peerless English essayist, Charles Lamb, of one of the most original and quaint, as stage records tell us, of English low

comedians, Dodd. The feeling expressed in those lines comes home to us in connexion with the admirable actor whom we have lately lost, with a touching appropriateness. And the appropriateness is increased by the marked resemblance that must have existed between the peculiarities of Dodd and the peculiarities of Keeley. "In expressing slowness of apprehension" (says Charles Lamb) "this actor surpassed all others. You could see the first dawn of an idea stealing slowly over his countenance, climbing up by little and little, with a painful process, till it cleared up at last to the fullness of a twilight conception—its highest meridian. He seemed to keep back his intellect, as some have had the power to retard their pulsation. The balloon takes less time in filling, than it took to cover the expression of his broad moony face, over all its quarters, with expression. A glimmer of understanding would appear in a corner of his eye, and, for lack of fuel, go out again. A part of his forehead would catch a little intelligence, and be a long time in communicating it to the remainder."

There is a world of imaginativeness, of course, in this charming piece of descriptive writing. Dodd himself would, perhaps, have been somewhat astonished to hear that he could convey all this with a look, and that his countenance was as full of meaning as Lord Burleigh's nod. But, due allowance made for Lamb's style, we detect in this passage a piece of thoughtful and appreciative criticism, so vivid, that to those to whom Elia's essays are familiar (as they should be to all lovers of pure English), the fortunate actor whom he commemorates seems a living reality. To see Keeley act, especially in the part of Sir Andrew Aguecheek—it was to Dodd's performance of that character that Charles Lamb in his essay specially alluded—was to create, in fancy, an irresistible association with this criticism, and to feel that what was written of Dodd might have been written of the actor of our time. Who does not confess how infinitely more telling wit is, when the speaker's face seems all unconscious of the humour of his words? There is an infection of pleasantness, no doubt, in the man who laughs heartily at his own fun; but he always gives us an impression of being like the child who writes under the efforts of his early art, "This is a horse;" "This is a dog," in order that there may be no mistake about them. "This is a joke—laugh at it." The grave humorist, who is a perpetual puzzle—leaving us never able to make out whether he is in fun or earnest—may have less universal power to please; but over those whom he does please, his power is much greater. The quietness and subtlety of Keeley might have prevented him from being such a favourite as he was, with the many, but for the personal peculiarities which, in his case, supplied the breadth of effect that was absent from his delicate acting. The quaint figure in its diminutive rotundity, and the "expansion of the broad moony face," were

irresistible in their suggestiveness of fun, even when the actor was gravest.

Dodd's face, it is easy to gather from Elia's description, must have been a triumph of gravity. Indeed, we are told, in the same essay, that he wore, in private life, a countenance "full of thought and carefulness." Lamb meets Dodd, for some months retired from the stage, strolling in the Temple-gardens, and judges him, "from his grave air and deportment, to be one of the old Benchers of the Inn." On closer inspection, he detects his mistake. "Was this the face," he says—"manly, sober, intelligent—which I had so often despised, made mocks at, made merry with? The remembrance of the freedoms which I had taken with it came upon me with a reproach of insult. I could have asked it pardon. I thought it looked upon me with a sense of injury." This gravity of face and bearing which distinguished Dodd among the "pleasant fellows" of his time was the inheritance of Keeley, just as the infectious spirits and sprightliness of Bannister were revived in Harley.

Low comedy is no limited sphere; it ranges over many and various degrees of art and acting, from the comedy of Touchstone and Dogberry, to the broad humour or no-humour of modern farce. Through all these various degrees, Keeley was equally admirable. Harley was an excellent artist in his way; but he was always full of his own humour, and showed it, as much as to say, "See how funny I am!" His audiences were willing enough to admit that he was, and indeed who could help it? but Keeley's was the truer art. In their respective performances of Dogberry, the difference was remarkable. The blunders of the old constable fell from Harley's lips as if he felt their absurdity, and enjoyed it; from Keeley's, with the most immovable and pompous stolidity, as from one who believed that the whole weight of Messina was on his shoulders, and that he was well worthy to bear it, and well able to bear it. If anybody had told the one Dogberry that he was a funny fellow, tempted thereto by the merry twinkle in his eye, he would have been treated to a glass of liquor at the nearest wine-shop; if he had so far forgotten himself as to offer such an insult to the dignity of the other, he would have been indignantly "moved on," or comprehended as a vagrom man of the most dangerous sort. No doubt in some characters, Harley's face and style, expressing mirthfulness in activity, gave him an advantage; as in Launcelot Gobbo, who is eminently a "wag," or believes himself one, and of whom it may be true that the total want of point betrayed by many of his utterances was intentional—a satirical comment on the funny man who, because he is very amusing sometimes, "will always be flouting," and often fails in being anything but silly. But the majority of Shakespeare's "clowns" are unconscious or saddened humorists; and their jokes are far more in keeping with the grave face than the gay. Sometimes we meet with two of them placed side by side

in sharp contrast; and that contrast can never have been better realised than by Keeley and Harley in the same play: as when the former played Sir Andrew to the Clown of the latter, in that very comedy of Twelfth Night, about which Charles Lamb gossips so delightfully. The contrast was even more effectively shown in Sheridan's Rivals, when Harley was the Acres, and Keeley the David. His more ambitious successors of the present day would scarcely submit to the degradation of playing David, to the Acres of a fellow-comedian of even equal standing in the salary-list of their theatre, however much nature may have fitted them for the one part, and unfitted them for the other. Keeley knew better; and what a delicious David he was! Though forced by the false, though most attractive art which inspired that school of comedy, to talk in a succession of epigrams, as rounded and brilliant as the wittiest fashionable of them all, Keeley made David a miracle of stolid rusticity: a man of one idea, very much in earnest, both in his disgust with his master's follies and in his anxiety for him—which in Keeley's hands acquired a touch of pathos from the devotion of the man.

For Keeley was a master of pathos in his way, and many of our most delightful memories of him are connected with characters into which, by a few words or a little touch, he threw a certain homely tenderness quite his own. He never strained that chord too far, but struck it, as it were, in passing, relying upon delicate ears to catch the sound as it fell. By the general public, perhaps, this power of his was not as fully recognised as it might have been. Poor Robson could make his audience laugh and cry alternately, at his will; and that he could do so was due to what was really an artistic defect in his acting. He was an actor of genius; but of subtlety he had little or none. He did not hint himself to his audience; he threw himself broadly at them; and he could bound at once, without preparation or gradation, from pathos to fun. Not so Keeley; subtle his acting was, in the highest degree; and his light and shade were most delicately and beautifully blended. He must have suffered sometimes, from the misplaced laughter of gods and groundlings (stalls not always excepted), at moments when his own eyes were filled with tears. For he was too sensitive an artist not to feel, when his part gave scope for feeling. All audiences, however, contain some delicate perception; and it is not only by critics and constant playgoers, that Keeley is remembered as among the most touching, as well as the drollest, of actors.

Of the personal regard of the public, he had an extraordinary share. One great difference between French and English audiences is, that the former have the higher feeling for the art, the latter for the artist. The noisy "receptions" which a favourite actor obtains with us, whenever he appears on the stage, are sometimes rather excessive in their demonstration; but they are very infectious, withal, in their enthu-

siasm, and are, doubtless, most inspiring to the performer. At a French theatre, an actor, however established his reputation and great his popularity, often has no "reception;" the tribute is confined to special occasions, as when he appears in some part which he has "created." It is the part, as it were, that is applauded in advance, and not the artist. There is something pleasant in the personal affection of a British audience, who make no such nice distinctions. Of that personal regard which unites us with our theatrical favourites, Keeley had a lion's share, and it followed him in his retirement so faithfully, that when the town heard of his death the other day, it regretted him as much as if he had left the world and the stage together.

In one sense, indeed, he did so: for though it was to all intents and purposes certain for some time past that he would never act again, he took no formal farewell of the theatre—a device, which is painful when it is real, as too rude and material a severing of the link between actor and public; but which of late years has been too often a fiction, a prelude to a succession of "last appearances" which provoke laughter and extinguish regret. We have no drawbacks of that nature on our recollections of Keeley; and we have still the consolation of hoping that his other half, the partner of his name and popularity—so closely united with him that we can never think of the one without the other—may not be entirely lost to the stage. We saw Keeley act on the occasion which proved to be his last appearance, when he played his old part of Dolly Spanker: one of the most finished figures in his portrait gallery. The little trot across the stage—the "Here I am, Gay"—the grotesque devotion and not unmanly weakness of the doting husband—made up a picture whose colours time had not in the least blurred or faded when he played for the last time. The stage was as elastic under his feet as it ever was in his best days; and he never allowed us to feel that he had overstayed his time. Ah! The *laudatores temporis acti* have reason on their side when they talk of the theatrical companies of old days, if there were many like him!

We do not profess in this little paper to attempt anything like an exhaustive criticism on Keeley's acting, or, indeed, anything that can properly be called criticism. Our purpose does not extend beyond a few words of admiring remembrance and regret: a momentary lingering on lost intellectual delights. We have mentioned his Dogberry. As we write, we hear again the very inflexions of his voice, and see again the wonderful expression of his face, at the supreme moment when he was called an Ass! No other catastrophe on earth, or in the waters under it, could have aroused in living man such an amazing exposition of stupendous astonishment, indignation, and incredulity, as that insult wrung from Dogberry as Keeley drew him. But his Verges was even finer. By the force



of his profound belief in Dogberry, one may say that he absorbed that Jackass into himself, sublimated and enhanced the drollery of the character, and made it all his own. The more preposterous Dogberry, the more steeped and lost in admiration he. When Dogberry was most ridiculous, Verges wandered away through the broadest realms of speculation, how the Heavens ever came to make a man so wondrous wise. It was a true triumph of Art. Considered with a reference to the very few words set down for Verges, it was certainly the most finished and thoughtful piece of suggestive comic acting that one can easily imagine possible. And it culminated when his asinine chief patted him on the head, and he first bent under the honour, and then became the taller for it, gazing into his patron's face with an expression of fatuous contentment perfectly marvellous.

In the melodrama of *The Sergeant's Wife*, where he and Mrs. Keeley played two innocent fellow-servants in a murdering household, most delightfully, his terrors were of the very finest order of acting. We can see him now, when the principal murderer, his master, patted him on the head, and praised him for a good lad, sinking and sinking under the bloodstained hand until the hand stopped, finding nothing to touch. In the *Loan of a Lover*, his Peter Spyk had no approach to a parallel that ever we have seen, on the English, French, or Italian stage. Its immovable stolidity, and apparent insensibility to everything but a big pipe, until he made the tender discovery that he loved the little woman who had grown up about him from a child—and its pathos when that truth burst upon him concurrently with the information that she was going to be married to some one else—were simply beyond praise. For the richest humour, his reading of a letter in *Betsy Baker* may be quoted; or his extraordinary devices for getting out of the room, in *Your Life's in Danger*, where he had to pass a man at breakfast who he thought might stop him by the way. Foremost among the pleasantest laughing faces we have ever seen at a Theatre, is our recollection of the Queen's face and its natural unrestrained abandonment to the humour of the scene, when, in *A Thumping Legacy*—at Drury Lane in Mr. Macready's time years ago—Keeley received the intelligence that he had come to Corsica not so much to inherit a property as to inherit a Vendetta, and, in supreme vexation of spirit, suddenly and surprisingly hit out at his informant after the British manner. There was once an unsuccessful piece at the Lyceum, founded on a charming tale by Washington Irving. We do not recollect a single point in Keeley's part, except that he had seen a ghost before the curtain rose. That he had indubitably seen it, and that he went about ever afterwards expecting to see it again, the audience knew as well as he did from the moment of his first entrance.

We are not thankful enough to great actors for the relief they give us, and the good they do us. These are but a few untwined Forget-

me-Nots scattered on a great actor's grave. In private, he had the heart of a child, and the integrity of the noblest man.

### WEAVER, WIT, AND POET.

A HOTLY contested election in a large city was just concluded, and the candidate of whose committee I had been an active member, had been returned at the head of the poll by a very splendid majority of more than a thousand ahead of his opponent. I was alone in the committee-room, and in the very best of tempers, when there walked in, unannounced, and very much the worse for liquor, a person, whom in these columns I will take the liberty of calling Mr. Donaldson. He was a man of about fifty years of age, unwashed, unkempt, and, as regards attire, in a state of "looped and windowed raggedness," that was distressing to behold. And more pitiable even than his physical plight was his moral degradation. I knew well who he was, and what he wanted; and though (as I said before) I was in very good humour with myself and all the world, as one is apt to be in the hour of success, I determined that I would not comply with Mr. Donaldson's demand. It was, as I anticipated, a request for money—for the small sum of five shillings—which, to do Mr. Donaldson justice, I must say he had very fairly earned. Mr. Donaldson had been a journeyman weaver—had a taste for reading and writing—was a man of great natural ability—had become a journalist, after a humble fashion—had published a volume of poems, which were neither very good nor very bad—and was a capital hand at epigrammatic squibs, both in prose and verse. In the composition of these, which our committee had published in the press and upon the walls of our city, he had done good service to the victorious candidate. He had received many sums of five and ten shillings during the progress of the election, and had spent them in drink. Had he been sober when he presented himself before me, he would, as a matter of course, have received his five shillings and a little good advice: which, not being a matter of course, it is more than probable he would not have taken. But as he was so painfully drunk, I resolved that I would not, that day, add fuel to the flame that was consuming him. I made him understand this, as peremptorily as I could, but as he was not savagely but only maudlin drunk, he was more aggrieved than offended at my Rhadamantine rigour, and appealed to my mercy rather than to my justice. But I was obdurate, and made him understand—though not without considerable difficulty—that if he would return in the morning, perfectly sober, "clothed, and in his right mind," he should have ten shillings instead of five, and the prospect of earning something more on account of the election. It was a long parley, and a very difficult victory to win; but I won it, partly by threats, partly by entreaties, and partly, I suppose, by the electrical influence of a strong will over a weak

one. The fact was, I knew and had heard so much good of this poor man, that I greatly desired not only an opportunity to do him a real service, but to hear from his own lips, when he was sober, the story of his life, his struggles, his temptations, and his hopes—if he had any.

He came the next morning at eight o'clock, according to appointment, ragged as usual, but with clean hands and face, and a light in his clear blue eyes, that seemed to show that the fumes of liquor in his brain were very volatile, and passed away quicker than is common with most people. I asked him if he were ready for a walk of a dozen miles, to a town to which we might easily have gone by rail had it suited my fancy. He expressed himself in the affirmative, though he said he should first of all like to have his breakfast. This I provided for him, not in money but in kind, for fear of accidents. The day was lovely, neither too hot nor too cold, and when, after twenty minutes' walk, we got clear of the streets, the beauty of the autumnal tints upon the trees, the greenness of the grass, the transparent blueness of the cloudless sky, the warmth of the sunshine, and the joyous freshness of the breeze, seemed to affect my ragged companion as I know they affected me, with a sense of physical enjoyment, and of gratitude to Heaven for the blessed gift of life. I soon engaged him in a conversation which gradually assumed, on his part, an autobiographical shape—the very shape that pleased me most—and told me the story of his life from his youth upwards. He was the son of a poor weaver in the West of Scotland, and was put to work at his father's trade at the tender age of eight years. Before that time he had learned to read at a little school kept by an old woman in the village, and being naturally quick, he had already stored his infant mind with fairy legends, stories of adventure, and snatches of verse. The hours of labour, at that time, in factory work were from six in the morning until eight in the evening, with two intervals for meals, half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. The overseer of the factory seeing the child engaged in reading during the dinner hour, and being surprised, on questioning him, to find the eager desire of knowledge that had taken possession of him, not only allowed him an additional couple of hours every day to attend a school, without making any deduction from his wages, but very generously paid for his schooling. By the time he was fifteen years of age, he had obtained considerable proficiency in English composition, a competent acquaintance with the rules of arithmetic, had studied Greek, Roman, and English history, together with geography, and knew something—but not much—of Latin. He also began to revel in the writings of Robert Burns, and to awake to the consciousness that he, too, vehemently desired to become a poet. Like Burns, too, his first rhymes welled from his heart in admiration of the beauty of a young girl in his own sphere of life. Precocious in his physical as well as in his mental powers, he fell desperately in love before he was sixteen,

and before he was seventeen, he was married to the girl of his first choice—like himself, a mill-worker. Between them both they earned about fourteen shillings a week, and on this slender pittance they commenced the hard battle of the world. The young man, as he grew older, discovered that he was a wit and a politician as well as a weaver and a poet, and at the time of the first Reform agitation he took the Radical side, and let off in the local newspapers of the neighbouring city, a series of squibs and crackers against the borough-mongers, as they were called, which excited much attention, and led to many inquiries for the author. He, on his part, was by no means unwilling to declare himself, and to receive such homage and pay as his effusions commanded—the homage considerable, the pay very scanty. Unthinking people, surprised to find such talents in a poor weaver, patronised him in their good-natured but blundering way; brought him into the society of his betters—better only in point of worldly position—and invited him to their convivial whisky parties.

"Many a time," said he, "when I would have been better pleased with a shilling in hard cash, I have drunk, at other people's expense, five shillings' worth of wine and whisky, and have been brought out, I feel it now, in the strength of my intellect, my form, and my sense of wit and humour, to make sport for these brainless but good-hearted Philistines, who enjoyed my conversation, and had very little of their own. I must own that I liked this kind of thing. I felt a sense of power and supremacy. I was a Triton among the minnows. My appetite grew by what it fed on. I knew myself to be the intellectual superior of the people who plied me with liquor to get the wit out of me, yet I did not despise them, or shun their society. On the contrary, I felt ill at ease with myself and with the world, if by an accident, I were not invited to any of their social 'cracks.' Off and on, I led this kind of life—being still a mill-hand, and gaining an occasional guinea for a poem—save the mark! when one of my comrades, the managing clerk in a lawyer's office, gave me the opportunity of an introduction to the editor of a liberal paper in the city, by bringing him to one of our symposia. He appeared to be as pleased with me as I was with him, and offered me a situation on his paper, partly as a collector of local news and paragraphs, and partly as a corrector of proofs, in which art and mystery I soon became tolerably expert. This was a great rise in the world for me, for I had a salary of two guineas a week (more than double the joint earnings of myself and wife), and I was thus enabled to take her out of the mill, and give her freedom to attend to the children. I was twenty-one years old at this time, and had three children, and the prospect of a fourth. But my old love of good-fellowship, and my power of repartee, and the knack of saying things that were either good in themselves, or that seemed good to those who heard them, especially when spiced with a little savagery or cynicism—which I never really felt in my

heart—proved my bane, to a far greater extent than in my humbler sphere as a weaver.

"For a time all went on smoothly enough, and I might have done well, had I been ordinarily prudent, and had not the twin devils of conceit and the love of flattery taken possession of me, to a degree that made me imagine I was one of the greatest wits and geniuses in the world, and that some of the good fellows, whose evenings I made so pleasant, would sometime or other find the means of advancing my fortunes. I am old enough—and sad enough now—to know that a man is his own best friend, if not his only one; and that he who expects others to help him forward in the great life-battle, while he himself does nothing, is as big a fool as was ever suffered to crawl upon the earth. But I was full of hope at that time, and had not discovered mankind to be that 'unco squad' which Robert Burns described. I was out so much at nights, and so late during my newspaper engagements—sometimes on business, oftener for pleasure—such pleasure as illimitable whisky toddy could supply—that my wife began to grieve and pine, and make things very disagreeable at home. This ought to have cured me of my unfortunate habits, but it did not—the more's the pity!—and afforded me, in my perversity of mind, an additional excuse for persistence in wrong-doing. It is an old story, too, and a sad one; and I need not repeat too much of it. Late hours and debaucheries too frequent, the one or the other, affected by degrees my capacity for work. I gave dissatisfaction at the office, and ultimately, I must say after many efforts on the part of my employer to bring me back into the ways of sobriety and regularity, I lost my situation.

"The blow for a while was stunning. But I plucked up heart. I had no idea of going back to the mill, even if I could have been taken on again. I felt that I was a journalist, and something better than a weaver; and a journalist I resolved to remain. But I saw no chance of advancement in this career at home, and as for London, which I once thought of attempting, I gave up the idea of it, and resolved to try my fortune in the United States. A little subscription was got up for me, sufficient to pay my passage to New York in a sailing packet—there were no steamboats on the Atlantic at that time—and to leave my wife as much as would maintain her for three months, even if she did not, as she said she would, go back to the mill. I was full of hope and courage, and resolved to send for her as soon as I could turn round in the New World. I had great ideas of my future. Andrew Jackson, whose Irish mother had once kept an apple-stall at a street corner in Limerick or Dublin, I forget which, was President of the United States, and if he, born so low, could rise so high, could not I rise in that land of liberty above my present mean estate, and be a little more of a somebody than I could ever hope to be at home? We had bad weather going out, and the voyage lasted seventy-one days, during all which time I had neither the means, nor the opportunity, for indulgence in liquor. I had

not been a week in New York before I found that I had made a great mistake as regards the chances of employment in that city; and I trudged away on foot to Philadelphia. Here also I found that I was out of my element, and discovered that America was not exactly the place for such as I, who was not a farmer, a farm-labourer, or a lusty mechanic, who was not able to clear a farm on the outskirts of civilisation, and fight with the bears and Red Indians. I was disappointed and sick at heart. No doubt I was a poor fool, and a coward as well. A countryman from the West of Scotland, whom I met in Philadelphia, helped me on a bit, and tried to get me a newspaper engagement. But I knew nothing of American politics, and did not care to learn; and became, I scarcely know how, or by what gradations, a mere loafer, living from hand to mouth, from hour to hour, as it were, on chances that were scarcely better for me than for the birds, or the stray dogs that prowled about the streets. I was long in this condition, brightened up now and then by my temporary friend and permanent foe, the whisky bottle, which was provided for me in the company of a few of my countrymen, who liked my society, and were glad to drink with any one who had recently arrived from the 'dear old country,' as they called it, and who loved to sing Auld Lang Syne, and Willie brewed a Peck o' Maut, and other songs that recalled Scotland to their memory.

"I had written home the news of my bad fortune, and after a while, at the instigation of my wife, a letter was sent to me from my old friend the lawyer's clerk, to say that another newspaper engagement, about as good as the last, but on another journal, awaited me, if I thought it advisable to return, and would notify the fact immediately. I was but too willing. The home-sickness was strong upon me. My Philadelphia friends subscribed money enough to pay my passage across the Atlantic, and gave me a little purse in hand, and a parting supper, which I remember to this day as one of the happiest incidents in my weary life. 'The mirth and fun grew fast and furious,' as we toasted Scotland and her worthies, and above all, 'the immortal memory of Robert Burns,' whose equal in genius on this occasion I fully believed myself to be—a belief, I think, that was shared by several of the company. The passage home was pleasanter than the voyage out, and occupied but nineteen days. I often thought, as I paced the deck, and I sometimes think the same now, that I ought, with my generous ideas—my love of company and conversation, and my conviviality of nature, to have been born to a good estate, and thus been enabled to dispense hospitality to high and low. I should have made a tolerably good country squire, and devoted my mornings to my books, my garden, or my farm, and my evenings to the company of good fellows. But with my tastes and predilections I was a mere waif and stray, a floating straw upon the river of life, and by no means the big ship that I thought myself.

"On my return home, after a happy meeting

with my family, I received the appointment that had been promised me, and resolved to work hard, and walk warily for the remainder of my days; to put the drag upon the wheel, or stop the coach of conviviality altogether. I kept my resolution indifferently well for six or seven years, and in addition to the current routine of my newspaper duties, threw off songs, ballads, and epigrams almost as freely as the clouds throw out the rain drops, and got as little for my drops as the clouds for theirs. I published a volume of them, which did not so greatly take the taste of the public, as to pay the expense of printing, and I at one time thought I should have had to go to jail, for the debt I had contracted for this unlucky venture. I got over it, somehow; though the thing was like a millstone round my neck for a longer time than I can now remember. I think it was the unsuccess of the unlucky book—I made a bonfire one night of three or four hundred unsold copies of it, determined that they should not go to the trunk-makers—that drove me for comfort to the whisky again. I took it as a medicine for the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, and found it successful.

Wi' tippenny we'll fear nae evil,  
Wi' usquebae we'll face the devil.

Such was my experience, as it has been that of thousands of others—and as long and as often as I was in the mood for it, I never had far to look to find companions to treat me, as in an earlier time—to laugh at my sallies of wit, if wit it was, and to applaud the lightest utterances of the rollicking humour that possessed me, after the third or fourth tumbler. For ten years I have been in this plight. I have knocked at death's door and not been admitted. I have slept in barns and outhouses. I have been in the hospital, and I have been in the lunatic asylum; and I am, as you now see me, a poor wreck of a man, one whom it is impossible to save, even if he were worth the salvage. My wife left me long ago; but is still alive. I dare not go to see her. My children are all grown up and able to take care of themselves—which is more than I can do. And yet I think I was made for better things. I feel some spark of divinity within me, that whisky has not quenched, and that I might have been a good man, if I had had a strong will to govern me in my early days, and train me properly. But I never had any guidance except the gratification of my own will; and cannot say with Robert Burns that the light that led astray was light from Heaven. No, it was light from Hell. You ask me if I have any hopes or plans for the future? Frankly, I have none. My mind—or what is left of it—is as purposeless as the wandering wind. It cannot fix itself to anything; and it is a wonder to me, if what I have said in our walk, has been consistent and coherent. I think, however, if I like anything, that I should like to get out of the city and all its ways, and live wholly in the country. It is my present idea—I don't know how long it will last—that I could take

the part of assistant gardener, if there were not much digging to do, for my back is weaker than my mind, and stooping pains me. But light work, pruning, training, weeding, and pottering about, as I might say, just to give me a pursuit, or the semblance of a pursuit, takes my fancy for the moment; and possibly, God knows! might make me respectable for the remainder of my days." "And your wife?" I interposed. "Well, poor woman, she thinks me incorrigible and irreclaimable. Perhaps I am, but I hope not; and could I exorcise the whisky demon out of me, it is very likely she would come back to me. Women are better than men, all the world over, suffer more, love more, and are worth more."

Mr. Donaldson would not sit down with me to dinner in the inn at which we halted. "I am too proud to sit down with you," he said; "too proud to afford the waiters an opportunity to stare at you and think you eccentric, or out of your mind, for consorting with such a ragged, rascally-looking vagabond as I am. Give me the means to get a dinner by myself, and I give you my honour I will spend it on dinner, and return to you as fresh and liquorless as I am now." I trusted him, and he kept his word; and we walked back to the great city in due time, when he received his stipulated guerdon for his loss of time; and made a solemn promise to call upon me that day week, sober. He kept his word in this instance also. Meanwhile, I had spoken about him to our friend the member for the city—interested him in Donaldson's talents, character, and prospects, and procured for him the post he coveted of assistant-gardener in the honourable gentleman's domain. He had light work—a little pleasant cottage to live in—and humble, but sufficient, wages. His wife rejoined him; and for six months, perhaps the happiest of his life, he lived amid the trees and flowers, and did not get drunk above once a fortnight. But the end was at hand. His constitution was shattered. The flame of life burned low in the socket, and he went off suddenly without a sign or a groan. Peace to his memory! He was an acorn that had the capacity for becoming an oak-tree if circumstances had favoured; but he fell into evil places, and rotted into barrenness; or, if the simile be more appropriate, he was found by a swine—the swine of Intemperance that consumed and destroyed him.

#### FACTS AND FANCIES.

##### THROWING STONES IN THE SEA.

WE sat on the shore at Shanklin,  
Howard, and Smith, and I;  
Smith was smoking, I was thinking,  
Howard was idling by.

He took a stone and tossed it  
Carelessly into the sea;  
And then another, again another,  
And sometimes two or three.

"What are you doing, Howard?"

"I'm losing my money again,—  
This little pebble's a thousand

I dropped in that scheme in Spain.



*This is a larger venture  
That in the Fisheries sank,  
And this is more than I like to tell—  
Swallowed in Dodge's Bank.*

*"This is a newspaper, vanished,  
With thrice a thousand at least;  
And this is a project, fair to study,  
For making champagne from yeast.  
This is a stone—pray, watch it;  
Ten thousand fully told,  
For converting old shoes to sugar,  
And turning flint to gold!"*

*And still he kept throwing, throwing  
The stones into the sea.  
"Howard! your losses grieve you!"  
"The devil a bit," quoth he;  
"But if I don't grow wiser  
Next time that Cash runs riot,  
I'll either drown or hang myself  
To keep my guineas quiet."*

#### IN THE HONEYMOON.

*"Oh world! I've tried thee and I tire;  
Thy pleasures are but future pain:  
Though much is good that we desire—  
Nothing is good that we attain!"*

*My love looked o'er my shoulder—  
Inquisitive beholder,  
As thus I wrote and thought,  
And said, "False rhymer, over free,  
Is this your verdict upon me,  
Despised as soon as caught?"*

*Lovers, ye know the answer due!  
But quick as thought, her fingers flew  
O'er cheeks and ears like bolt from quiver,  
And slew the kiss I meant to give her.*

#### THOSE CONVENT BELLES.

THERE is an old-fashioned expression, "our wits jumped together," to denote that two persons, without previous concert, arrived at the same conclusion. It is astonishing how people's wits, although separated by time and place, will, under like circumstances, jump together. On our table there has been lying, not unread, a book called "*Le Couvent; Mémoires d'une Religieuse*," "*Memoirs of a Nun*, by Sister X." We leave the candid reader to judge whether anybody else's wits have lately been jumping in accordance with the authoress's.

Her story, though not short, is simple. Under the influence of religious excitement, she felt it her duty to leave her parents, and quit domestic, for conventual life. Once caged, her friends were further estranged from her by silence and concealments which were not her fault. Then grim death passed that way, and rendered regrets and remorse equally unavailing. The charm of enthusiasm and novelty was broken before very long; but the irrevocable step having been taken, nothing remained but bitter repent-

ance. Her superiors were not slow to discover the change, nor to mete out its punishment without stint or mercy. In such cases, both parties' minds become envenomed; compromise and reconciliation are scarcely possible. Persecution followed persecution; until the refractory nun, to escape incarceration in a dungeon, cut the Gordian knot (instead of trying, like poor Miss Saurin, to untie it) by scaling her prison walls, and running away.

Sister X. repudiates, at the outset of her narrative, any hostility to the Papal religion. She has nothing to say either against the celibacy of the clergy, or monastic vows. What she would proclaim on the house-tops is, that multitudes of young girls are caught by deceitful promises, of a happiness unattainable on earth. She would tell them that conventual life has its suffering, its weariness, its regret, its persecution, its bitterness. She would have everybody know the abuse there made of moral force, in default of material force.

We may be told, over and over again, that nuns are no longer constrained by violence. True; abbesses no longer have their dungeons as a right; official condemnations are out of fashion; but does not moral compulsion still exist? What is to become of a poor girl, whose dower has been swallowed by the ever-gaping gulf of monastic poverty? In vain will they say, as to a prisoner who has completed his term, "Go; you are free; the doors are open." Go whither? When a justly-offended and undervalued family have banished you from their thoughts; when you have not a rag to cover you, nor a farthing to buy a morsel of bread, and when ruined health is your only patrimony, where can you go? Sister X. requires that every person who has become tired of a cloistered life, and who brought a dower to the establishment, should have a right, on retiring from it, to at least a portion of that dower. It seems to us that Sister X.'s wits have not, in this matter, jumped alone.

Sister X. accuses nunneries of being too much given to intrigue, indiscreet curiosity, worldly frequentations, and, above all, to an inordinate greed of gain. In convents, as throughout the rest of the world, with and for money almost everything can be done. It strangely unsettles the balance of justice. "A rich postulant! A noble postulant! What a deal of good we might do with her money! What dust we might throw in people's eyes with her name!" Whilst vulgar postulants are kept to the

strict observance of rules, the privileged candidate is petted and caressed. No sacrifice is too great to keep her. The rules are relaxed; caprices are tolerated; eyes are closed to defects of temper.

Some time after her profession, Sister X., while travelling with two elderly nuns, feigned to be overcome with sleep; and indeed it was difficult to hear their insipid talk without yawning. Believing her really asleep, they soon gave their conversation another turn.

"Can you comprehend, *ma sœur*," asked one of them, "why they allowed such a person as Mademoiselle de Boys-Crespin to profess? A girl who would never be obedient nor mortify the flesh, but lay in bed without being ill, and out of pure whim? She addressed the superiors haughtily and free-and-easily; she kept herself to herself, and even her confessor could make nothing of her."

"I know all about that, *ma sœur*," replied the other; "more than anybody else. For my sins, I suppose, I had Sister de Boys-Crespin for three whole months in the laundry with me. I wonder she did not drive me crazy. Sometimes she upset the novices' discipline by larking—what the world calls larking; sometimes she was so ill-humoured and sulky that nobody dared go near her. One day I gave her some kitchen cloths to iron; she almost threw them in my face. Another time, when silence was to be kept, she took it into her head to hum a profane song, an opera tune; I gently requested her to hold her tongue. All I got for answer was, 'You won't let me sing? Eh bien! I will dance instead!' And off she went, amongst the tables, jumping and skipping, putting herself into postures and giving herself airs—really, *ma sœur*, she made me blush. The other novices laughed till they cried. That evening, a general penance was inflicted. But Sister de Boys-Crespin went to bed; she had a headache."

"I should like to know, then, what made them keep such a girl as that?"

"No doubt, *ma sœur*, 'tis a very sad case; but I have heard both Madame Clarisse and Madame Hilarie say that our house was greatly in need of her dower. She was very rich. They talked of three hundred thousand francs in ready cash, and of a château, a real château, that would come to her at her father's death. They were obliged to manage carefully and have plenty of patience and perseverance, to get her to make her profession at all. At every

instant, the mothers superior were afraid she was going to slip through their fingers."

"Three hundred thousand francs; oh, *ma sœur*!" replied the other nun. "Three hundred thousand francs and a château! That's something indeed! I can now understand the reverend mothers' indulgence; with the exception of Madame de Gronier, I think, we have never caught such a dower as that."

"I fancy not, *ma sœur*."

And thus, by pretending to be asleep, Sister X. discovered the secret of the complaisance with which Mademoiselle de Boys-Crespin had been treated. It draws from her the remark, that the convents of the last century crumbled under the weight of vice and sensual gratification; but that those of the present, faithful mirrors of the epoch, will sink beneath the guilt of ill-gotten wealth.

Before very long, a change of house was ordered, but not for the benefit of her health. According to the usage of the congregation, she was not informed where she was going until just before she stepped into the diligence, and even then she was neither told the importance of the establishment nor the name of its superior. A lay sister went with her as travelling companion, police-woman, and spy. At a certain town, a young infantry officer got up into the coupe, making the third passenger, and filling it. Although she had assumed what they call in the convent "the livery of the world," that is to say, a lay costume, to travel in, the lay sister's black dress, their reserved behaviour and their monastic manners betrayed them as religious obeying orders. Once settled in his seat, the officer tried to make himself agreeable. His eyes sought to penetrate her thick black veil; he addressed her in a few kind and pleasant words. His voice reminded her of times gone by. She answered by pointing to her breviary. Bitter thoughts oppressed her heart; the father she had disobeyed and estranged, the lover she had sacrificed, the miserable existence she had led ever since she gave her confidence to that false wretch, the Curé of Saint Marceau! The burden was too heavy to bear without tottering. Horrified by the retrospect, she burst into tears. The lay sister tried hard to make her stifle her grief.

"What is the meaning of this despair?" asked the officer, interposing. "Are you suffering, madame, under compulsion? Are they conducting you anywhere against your

will? If you require the assistance of a man of honour, you have only to say the word, and I am ready to protect you."

Instead of answering, Sister X. was choked by her emotion. Her nervous system, which had been pitilessly and incessantly tried, was now for the moment so completely unstrung, that she could no more cease sobbing, than she could cease to breathe.

As the officer continued to press his inquiries, the lay sister replied that her companion was ill; that she was taking her to a milder climate for the benefit of her health; and that she had long been subject to attacks of this kind. At Bar-le-Duc the officer left them; but, before getting out of the coupé, he renewed his offers of assistance. Sister X. had sufficiently recovered herself to thank him, and to say that she was going where they were taking her to, completely of her own accord. The young man hesitated, and regarded the follower with mistrustful looks; his countenance expressed what was passing in his mind, and made a strong impression on the victim. The instant before he left the diligence, he whispered to her his name and address, and then said aloud, "If you want any help, you may reckon upon me."

The lay sister was all eyes and ears.

The first thing she did, after their arrival, was to give the mother superior, one Madame Ludivine, a garbled account of this adventure. According to her, Sister X. had acted a part in order to attract the officer's attention; she ran the risk of causing a horrible scandal; it was possible the gentleman might be an old acquaintance; they seemed to understand each other; perhaps he joined them with the intention of carrying her off, and so forth.

Madame Ludivine, on Sister X.'s presenting herself, questioned her in a coarse and offensive style, quite different to the custom of the congregation, in which, if there is no cordiality, the forms of politeness and good society are at least observed. The offender frankly avowed the impression that family recollections had made upon her.

"You are not a true religious, *ma sœur*," harshly replied the superioress, "if, after three years' profession, you cannot command your feelings better. It is deplorable weakness! Try and make a thorough reform in your conduct; and remember that you have no right to think of anything else, except the *Bon Dieu* and the fulfilment of your duties. Go; you will make your beginning here with three days' penitence."

Sister X. knelt, in humble submission to the rebuke. It seems that she did not bow her head sufficiently. "Lower than that," said the mother, pushing it down with her hand. "Lower than that. Where do you come from? Is that the way you have been used to make genuflexions?"

"Good God!" thought the sister, "what is to become of me? If this is the beginning, what will be the end?"

Notwithstanding her confusion, she had time to cast a glance both on the "superioress" herself and the eccentric luxury of her reception-room. It required no effort of imagination to recognise the grande dame, the wealthy heiress, under the habit of the recluse. That same evening she learnt that the young mother superior, so disdainful and proud, was no other than Mlle. de Boys-Crespin, in religion Madame Ludivine. Her fortune and family fully explained her rapid advancement in conventual dignities. Although scarcely five-and-twenty, she had been a superioress for the last two years.

In this establishment, she reigned like a queen, delighting in the homage of her little court. In person, she was above the middle height, very mundane in style and manner. She took great care of her motherly self; her linen was of the finest and of snowy whiteness. The poor sister who had to get it up, received more scoldings than compliments. The stuff for her religious habit was said to be made expressly for her. But the perfection of her dress could not cover the plainness of her face. Madame Ludivine was blonde, or rather red-haired; and her low flat forehead was overgrown by tresses, rebellious to every kind of water and pomade. Pale blue eyes with no speculation in them, a broken nose too short originally, and an ill-cut mouth, made a whole that was far from attractive. Nevertheless, at first sight, her ugliness did not produce its full impression. She had a beautifully white skin, magnificent teeth, and a ready smile, when she chose. Her voice was soft and insinuating with equals and favourites, although abrupt and imperious when addressing inferiors, or those of the sisterhood not admitted to her intimacy.

Madame's apartments scarcely accorded with our notions about the lodging of a virgin, wholly devoted to God. Her salon was charming, furnished with taste and whim. You would say that she had tried to revive the type of the worldly abbesses of the last century. In temper she was

not changed since she flung the kitchen rags in Sister Celeste's face. Her gaiety and her ill-humour were equally annoying; her sarcasms were even worse than her rebuffs: she indulged in them without respect to persons. The very bishop who had appointed her was obliged to submit to her raillery.

One of her usual butts was poor Father Augustin, the almoner of the convent; a worthy man some fifty years of age, of limited intelligence, and with a face as vulgar as his manners. In consequence of his love for the table, he had grown as big and as round as a tub. Madame Ludvine advised him to apply for a dispensation from fast days, for the sake of his health. She pampered his appetite with delicate dishes, and whatever she knew he liked the best; and then when he joined the sisterhood, at "recreation," with a purple face and snorting like a fatted ox, she burst out laughing, ran to meet him, inquired how he did, whether his digestion was good, entering into childish and almost improper details. Father Augustin fell in with her pleasantries, though they might sometimes prick deeper than the skin; but how was it possible for him—a mere peasant with a little of the mud rubbed off—to quarrel with a Supérieure who sat such capital dinners before him? Madame Ludvine's convent had a wealthy neighbour, named M. de Blassac, who was suffering from an incurable disease, and never went beyond his garden, where they dragged him about in an invalid chair. He had formerly been secretary to an embassy, lived in grand style, keeping three men-servants besides a gardener. He was a bachelor, a stranger to the town, and had no relations. At irregular intervals he was visited by a young German, who appeared to be his only acquaintance. Those who best knew his affairs, said he was worth a million—absolutely a million of francs! Madame Ludvine had great hopes of inheriting this wealth, or at least getting a handsome legacy. The least he could do, was to leave the community his mansion and gardens, abutting on its walls. It was rumoured that he had promised them to Madame Ludvine; and she, like the milkmaid in the story, had already disposed of them in her own mind; on part, she would extend the convent buildings; the other part would sell for a hundred thousand francs.

During her predecessor's time, there had been friendly intercourse between the invalid and the convent. The knowing ones (and the veil covers as many as any other head-

dress does), would have it that he and the former superioress were old acquaintances who met here "by accident." She gave him permission to attend mass at their chapel, and for that purpose had allowed him to open a door upon a sort of neutral ground between the two properties. Madame Ludvine knew better than to withdraw the privilege.

An old man reputed so rich, with only servants about him, was necessarily run after by legacy hunters. If, on one side, his garden was contiguous to the convent, on the other it joined a "Seminary" for candidates for the priesthood. A third competitor, the founder of a new religious corporation, patronised by Mademoiselle Jeannette, Monsieur's housekeeper, made his way without fuss, and received for his share, in presents of money, more than the two rival houses put together. Probably, the old diplomatist was amused by the jealousies, which broke the monotony of his retirement. While he did not discourage the agents of the Seminary, he liberally and secretly assisted the other, whom, with a smile, he called, "that poor devil of an Abbé;" at the same time he courteously accepted the attentions of "those worthy sisters," repaying them with promises and the produce of his garden which he did not want himself.

Madame Ludvine paid him frequent visits. He appeared enchanted with her company. He praised her intelligence and the zeal she displayed in the interests of her house. After their customary game at chess, he made her show him her architect's plans. He examined them carefully, approved or found fault, suggested improvements; and when she observed, with a heavy sigh, "All this will cost a deal of money!" he would reply, "Allons! allons! ma bonne mère. Have you no faith in Providence? Hope for the best. Your work is a holy one."

At last Madame Ludvine's visits were so frequent and long that she thought fit to justify them to the chapter. She explained that she expected him to be a benefactor to the house, but that her chief anxiety was to procure him the happiness of a holy death. Shortly afterwards, in her presence, M. de Blassac formally handed a sealed paper to his notary, saying at the same time, "This is what I intend for those saintly women." As the notary had received nothing of the kind for anybody else, Madame Ludvine believed herself the sole legatee.

In spite of her demonstrations of affection, in spite of her cajolery and fond ex-



pressions (she often called him her Petit Papa), she must have thought he was in no hurry to die. Her proud temper suffered from the contact with his servants, and the terms of equality to which she was obliged to admit them, and she confessed to her confidants that her mind would not be completely easy until after the opening of the will. Every now and then she tried to extract ready money from him. One day she even urged upon him the pretended sale of his mansion in favour of the convent, in order, she said, to avoid any lawsuit that might be brought against them. "It is not a bad idea," he replied, with his habitual smile; "but what, my dear, would be the use of it? You know I have no family belonging to me?" The careless way in which the words were spoken completely reassured Madame Ludivine's fears.

He soon declined rapidly; nevertheless he still attended mass in his wheel-chair, dressed in a full suit of black, and drawn by a livery servant. A big diamond sparkled on his white cravat, and numerous "decorations" adorned his button-hole. His complexion was of the colour and texture of parchment, his cheeks were hollow, his iron-grey hair was carefully arranged and perfumed. A long aquiline nose made thinner by suffering, pale thin lips on which a vague smile was stereotyped, and bright hazel eyes deep-set beneath shaggy eyebrows, gave to his countenance a subdued expression of cunning and mockery. They wheeled him into the choir, affectionately attended by the sisters; one handed him a prayer-book, another supplied him with a charcoal foot-warmer.

At last he died. Father Augustin, Madame Ludivine, the sisters attached to the infirmary and the sacristy, never left him. Scarcely had he closed his eyes before Madame Ludivine gave herself the airs of an heiress, acting as if she were the mistress of the house. The servants, especially Mademoiselle Jeanette, let her have her own way, and laughed in their sleeves. The German stranger (reputed to be M. de Blassac's natural son), the occasional visitor, soon arrived. He was armed with a will in every respect correct, but dated several years ago. He also considered himself master there, and his meeting with the religious lady was curious to behold. He seemed just a little upset when they informed him that M. de Blassac had confided a more recent will to his notary.

The opening of this "will" was a scene for a dramatist. Madame Ludivine was present, assisted by the steward and the

legal adviser of the convent. On the packet was inscribed, "Not to be opened till after my death." Every neck was outstretched, every ear attentive. After the first envelope, they came to a second, and then to a third. The stranger maintained his German phlegm, Madame Ludivine strove to imitate him. Finally, inside several sheets of paper curiously folded one over the other, the notary, who gravely performed the ceremony, found a pen-and-ink drawing, done on card-paper. It represented a cat and a rat playing chess together; and beneath in the diplomatist's well-known handwriting, was the device:

A Bon Chat, Bon Rat.

Which, interpreted, is "Tit for Tat," or "The Biter Bit."

All those who had no interest in the matter gave way to laughter. The German never moved a muscle, but took up the drawing and examined it, as if to appreciate its merits. Madame Ludivine, unable to control herself, screamed, "Oh, the wretch!" and fell fainting into the steward's arms.

We give here, by preference, a comic passage, though there are plenty that border on tragedy to be found in the *Memoirs of this Religieuse*. In vol. xiii. of our late Series, p. 7, will be found Monastic Mysteries, from the revelations of Enrichetta Caracciola, an Italian escaped, and afterwards married, nun. The *Chronique of Louvain*, in Belgium, has recently related a case of sequestration at a convent near that town. The victim is a nun belonging to one of the best families in the neighbourhood, and whom the lady superior had placed in a damp, underground cell. She had been several days in confinement, when, from the narrow opening by which her prison received a little light from the garden, she succeeded in attracting the attention of a man working there, and who, at her entreaties, consented to procure for her writing materials, and to convey a letter to her brother-in-law. He, on receiving the communication, proceeded to the convent, and asked to see his sister-in-law, but was informed that she was in religious retirement, and could not be seen. He returned three hours later, accompanied by a commissary of police, whom he left outside, and then repeated his demand. He received a similar reply; but on his insisting, the superior at length became embarrassed. He then opened the door to the police officer, who compelled the directress to accompany them to the cellars underground: where they found not only the lady in question,

but also five other nuns confined in like manner, all of whom, on recovering their liberty, took advantage of the commissary's presence to quit the establishment and return to their friends. The case is to come before the courts of law.

What strikes one in all these instances, and now, unfortunately, in like events in England, is that, in four different countries, widely diverse in all their circumstances—in Italy, France, Belgium, Great Britain—the respective stories run almost parallel to each other. Convents are the same, wherever established; convent life may change its climate, but never its animus. There is the same capitation, the same interruption and stifling of family affections, the same growing dislike between certain members of the community, the same persecution, at first petty, then diabolical; the same tension of the cord, the same final snapping thereof, either by escape or expulsion—which become scandalous—or by oubliettes and other means of “forgetting” and suppressing, which we may guess at, without deserving the reproach of wicked inventiveness.

When infatuated persons are weak enough to believe that they may merit heaven by making earth hell, we pity them heartily and sincerely; but we feel something stronger than pity for those, whose term of life on earth is made a hell *by others*, under the pretext of insuring their entrance to heaven. Self-inflicted torment we can regard with compassion; the tormentors of enthusiastic girls and broken-hearted women, we ought firmly to suppress, if possible. True, the oppressors would have no power but for the fault or the error of the victims, who place themselves in their hands. But high-flown young women, we hope, will now reflect whether the tyranny they are likely to meet with in the world, be not preferable to the mercies of a Reverend Mother Brownrigg; and whether, after all, it be wise to risk the leap out of a secular frying-pan into a religious fire.

#### AS THE CROW FLIES.

BODMIN TO PADSTOW.

AND now the crow, turning away from civilisation, strikes across the stormy Bodmin moors, where the ghost of the Cornish wizard Tregagle bides his doom, expiates his crime, and is tormented by the relentless master whom he served so well. His favourite haunt is a small Dead Sea, called Dozmare Pool, a little tarn, eight hundred and ninety feet above the sea, not far from Brown Willie and the old tin workings on the Fowey. Wicked Treg-

eagle was a dishonest steward of Lord Robartes, at Landhydrock, where a room in the house is still called, Tregagle's. This Sir Giles Overreach of the Carolan times cheated the tenants, destroyed papers, forged deeds, and sold land not his own. He amassed money enough to purchase the estate of Trevorder, in St. Breock. Certain it is, he murdered a sister, an angel who stood between him and his prey, and his miserable wife and children also fell victims to his pitiless cruelty. When death came to strike the monster, who trembled at his approach, Tregagle heaped gold on the priests to sing, and pray, and save him from his certain doom. Their exorcisms succeeded, he died, and they laid him at rest in St. Breock church. But the devil was still watching—a law-suit arose at Bodmin about some lands, the title deeds of which Tregagle had destroyed.

The case was argued over and over; trial after trial, and yet no result. At last even lawyers' expedients were exhausted. A final decision was to be given. Everything turned on the validity of a certain deed. The counsel for the defence was in despair. The judge was about to sum up. The court was hushed, when the minister of St. Breward entered, leading the corpse of Tregagle. There was a shudder of horror when counsel, pale, but still brazen, commenced an exhaustive cross-examination of the unjust steward. The result proved a system of complicated fraud, of which the honest defendant had been the victim, and the trembling jury gave a unanimous and speedy verdict in his favour.

Now came the difficulty about laying the ghost of the dreadful witness. He kept following the defendant everywhere, and rendering his newly-gained property a burden to him. The lawyers and priests at last united their cunning, and devised a plan. They would set Tregagle a purgatorial task, during which he might slowly repent, and during the performance of which he was safe from the Devil's claws. He should drain Dozmare, a tidal and bottomless pool. Drain it moreover, proposed a sly curate, with a limpet shell with a hole in it. He worked hard in that desolate place, and on stormy winter nights was heard howling at the hopelessness of his eternal task. The storms and lightnings tried to drive him from his labour, and then, if he rested for a moment, he was chased by the Devil and all his hounds to the Roche Rocks, where he obtained respite by ramming his head through the east window of St. Michael's chapel, where hermit lepers once dwelt.

For some reason not quite decided, Tregagle got tired of Dozmare Pool, and was then sent to the north coast, near Padstow, to make trusses and ropes of sand. The moment he had packed and twisted them, the breakers came and rolled them level. Daughters of the Danaides! it was positively unbearable. The inhabitants of Padstow, maddened by his howlings, sent for St. Petrock to remove the monster to anywhere on the southern coast, out of hearing.

St. Petrock deposited his encumbrance on

Bareppa, and sentenced him to carry sacks of sand across the estuary of the Looe, and to empty them at Porthleven, till the beach was entirely cleared as far as the rocks. Artful St. Petrock had observed that the sweep of the tide was from Trewavas Head towards the Lizard, and that every day's wave would roll back the sand. Long did poor Tregeagle labour, but all in vain; and at last his loud howlings began to seriously disturb the fishermen of Porthleven. A mischievous goblin at last brought them relief. One night when the giant, laden with an enormous sack of sand, was wading across the mouth of the estuary, the goblin, out of pure malice, tripped up Tregeagle. The sea was lashed by a storm at the time, and, as the steward fell, the contents of his sack were poured out across the arm of the sea, and formed a bar which at once destroyed the commerce of Helston (Ellas' town).

Anger and weapons were useless; so, by bell, book, and candle, the priest again put chains on the wayward and tormented spirit, and transported him to the Land's End. His task this time was more tremendous than ever. He was condemned to sweep all the sands from Porthcurnow Cove round the great granite headland of Tol-Peden Penwith into Nanjissal Cove. There is one thing against him, and that is the strong sweep of the Gulf Stream; but he perseveres. Those sighing sounds, heard before the sou'-west gales, are said to be his moanings, when he knows the tempest is coming, to scatter the sand he has with such cruel toil collected.

Another version of the great Cornish legend, an amalgam of many centuries of myths, represents Tregeagle, when exorcised by the priest's magic circle, changing into a black bull, at first furious at the prayers, but gradually growing quiet as a lamb. He was at last sent to Genvor Cove, and sentenced to make trusses of sand and carry them up to Escol's Cliff. Many winters Tregeagle toiled at this unsatisfactory business, till he suddenly thought of bringing water from an adjacent stream and freezing the sand. This he did, and finishing his job, went back to the defendant in the Bodmin trial, and would have torn him in pieces had he not had a child in his arms. But over innocent children spirits have no power. The impracticable Tregeagle was then sentenced to the same task, minus all fresh water. In one legend Tregeagle is made lord of a castle which stood by Dozmare Pool, the Bodmin moors being his hunting forests. Enchantment has removed the castle, and turned the oak trees into granite blocks. Near St. Roche there is a granite pillar twelve feet high, which is called Tregeagle's staff. Tregeagle, one night crossing the Daporth hills, lost his hat, and running to get it, flung away his staff to lighten him in his search. The hat, a great disk of granite, remained on a neighbouring hill till 1798, when some soldiers camping there, fancying it to be the cause of the constant rain that tormented them, hurled it down into the sea.

And now the crow will take a bold flight seaward, far from the ceaseless mists that float over the Bodmin moors and the vaporous rains that beat on the Four-hole Cross, and the desert heath of Temple Moor, into King Arthur's country. At Tintagel-by-the-Sea he was born, and at Slaughter Bridge, close by, he fell with all his knights beside him. This Arthur, who owes everything to Alfred—not King Alfred, but Alfred Tennyson—is divisible into two parts: the fabulous Arthur and the semi-fabulous Arthur of semi-fabulous history. He was probably really a British chief of the sixth century. He is said to have defeated the Saxons in twelve battles, at last to have been wounded to death in a battle at Camelford, and then to have been conveyed by sea to Glastonbury, where he died and was buried. In the romances he is made to conquer Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Norway, and Gaul. Geoffrey of Monmouth tells the story of Arthur from Armorican sources, and a romance about him was one of the earliest books printed by Caxton. Leland says that near Camelford, where Arthur's last battle was fought, pieces of armour, rings, and brass furniture for horses, were still sometimes dug up at Slaughter Bridge, where ages ago

All day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea,  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord.

Across the stream of the Camel in a valley near Boscastle, not far from the sea, there is a bridge of flat stones upon uprights. The tradition is that this stream ran crimson on the fatal day when Arthur slew Mordred, his traitorous nephew, at this spot, having previously, in front of where Worthyvale House now stands, received a wound from Mordred's poisoned sword. An engraved stone over the stream is said to still mark the exact spot. The Cornish tradition is that Arthur was transformed into a red-legged chough, and it is therefore still thought unlucky to kill one of these birds.

There is a tradition that the Danes once landed at Genvor Cove. Alarm fires instantly spread from Carn Brea to St. Agnes beacon, and from the Great Stone to Cadbarrow, and from Cadbarrow to Brown Willie. King Arthur, then at Tintagel, feasting with nine other kings, instantly marched to the Land's End, and smote the red-haired Danes so terribly, that only those escaped who had charge of the ships. The mill of Vellan Druchar was that day worked with blood. The ships, too, were cast on shore, and left so high among the rocks by an extraordinary spring tide, that for years the birds built in the rigging. After the battle, at which Merlin was present, Arthur and his nine kings pledged each other in holy water from St. Sennan's well. They returned thanks for their victory in St. Sennan's chapel, and finally dined together on the Table Rock. The old name for the Land's End was The Headland of Blood, and Bollait, a place near, is The Field of Slaughter.

Tintagel, Arthur's old palace by the sea, is certainly one of the most romantic spots in England. It stands on a desolate precipice of slate rock, which seems rent by an earthquake into two parts, the sea having undermined it. Half the castle stands on the mainland and half on the isolated rock, where the citadel and chapel are. Many of the walls have fallen, those that remain are shattered and ruinous. Leland describes it as having been "a marvellous strong and noble fortress," almost impregnable, and on a high and terrible crag, with a draw-bridge crossing the chasm.

The old landing place Porthleven, the "Iron Gate" at the foot of the promontory, is supposed to be British work of great antiquity. Tintagel is Tennyson's "many-towered Camelot," where the wise and brave king once held court, with gentle Gawain, Launcelot the champion of the lake, and generous Sir Tristram. Fuller calls the son of Pendragon "the British Hercules." This Tintagel, "the impregnable fortress," the stronghold of the princes of Cornwall, is frequently mentioned in old romances. It was supposed to become invisible twice in every year. "Dunchine," the castle of the Cleft, is mentioned in Domesday Book. When the Earls of Cornwall held it, Earl Richard, the son of King John, entertained here his nephew David, Prince of Wales. It next became a crown prison. In 1385 a lord mayor of London was sent here for a contumacious mayoralty; but in Elizabeth's reign the grave Burleigh shook his head at the cost of the repairs, and allowed the sea and storm at last to conquer. A curse seems on the place now; no lichens spot the stones, no ivy grows over them; there they stand, bare as the sea-vexed rocks below. The cliffs here are hung with samphire. The people of Bossiney believe that Arthur still haunts these ruined battlements, in the shape of a chough or a raven. Cervantes mentions this superstition in his *Don Quixote*. "Have you not read in the famous exploits of King Arthur, of whom there goes an old tradition that this king did not die, but that by magic art he was turned into a raven, and that in process of time he shall reign again, and recover his kingdom and sceptre, for which reason it cannot be proved that from that time to this any Englishman has killed a raven?" The name of Arthur's discreditable queen, Guinivere, is still common in Cornwall under the disguised form of "Jennifer."

Strange to think, that perhaps, where those cushions of sea pinks that cover the top of the citadel cliff now grow, Arthur and his knights once trod. Wild sea birds scream where the harpers once sang the praises of their king. The glory and the praise are gone; no words of love or courage are heard now, only the sound of the mournful waves; as Sir Bedivere said:

The whole Round Table is dissolved,  
Which was an image of the mighty world,  
And the days darken round me and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.

The crow has a fair westward flight before

him now along the wild north Cornish coast, where the granite cliffs are reddened as if with the blood of seamen that have been so often hurled against them by the cruel sea, and left to perish at their base. Every village along this storm-swept coast, this churchyard of sailors, has its own strange legend of vapoury phantom ships, of fairy dances round old cromlechs on the moors, of saints' miracles, of daring smugglers and the caverns they haunted, of mermaids and their love for the sons of men, of giants and their wars, of King Arthur and his knights, of wreckers and their savagery, of witches and their cantrips, of old churches, and the consecrated bells that rejoice and sorrow within their crumbling salt-corroded towers.

Forrabury (Bottreaux) church, that stands on the cliff above Boscastle, a town situated in a little seaside ravine, like a small Balaclava, has a fine legend, which the Rev. Mr. Hawker, the Cornish poet, has immortalised. The tower has no bells. From the silent tower of Bottreaux, says Mr. Wilkie Collins, no chimes have ever sounded for a marriage, no knell has ever been heard for a funeral. The reason for the silence is this. Centuries ago the Forrabury people resolved to have a peal of bells which should rival those at Tintagel, which rang merrily at the marriage, and tolled mournfully at the death of King Arthur. The bells were cast, blessed with cross and sigil, and while still warm from the foundry, shipped for Forrabury. The bark had a halcyon journey with its blessed burden, and was soon in sight of the slate rocks of Bottreaux. As the vesper bell sounded from Tintagel, the pious pilot crossed himself, and knelt to thank God for the safe and prosperous voyage. The mocking captain sneered on his piety. "Thank God?" said he; "forsooth, thank my hand at the helm; thank the good ship and the stout canvas; thank me at sea, and thank the saints when at home." The pilot reproved him, but in vain. The vessel was already approaching the harbour, the people of Forrabury stood on the cliffs hailing the white sails every moment looming larger. All at once a supernatural wave rolled mountains high towards the vessel; it sank before it without a struggle. The impious captain and the cursing crew all perished, the pious pilot alone was saved. And now, when a storm is brooding, and the sea grows troubled with a mighty anger, the bells of Forrabury are still heard deep below the waves, tolling for the dead. From that day to this the tower of Bottreaux has remained silent.

In a valley running up from the sea near Boscastle stands the ancient mossy church of Minster, overlooking a dell of old oak trees. The tower of this church was pulled down centuries ago. The local legend has it, that the monks of old time used to place a light in one of the windows of the tower, to guide belated worshippers at night to their altar. Whether the monks had a special horror of wreckers, we know not, but certain it is that



sailors and fishermen, looking up the gorge of Boscastle, frequently mistook this tower by day for a landmark, by night for a beacon. Wrecks sometimes happened, and when they did happen, the monks regretfully shared the bales, chests, and kegs, and prayed for the dead men's souls, with special fervour. This occurred, however, so frequently that the tower at last got an ill name as a lure to a dangerous port, and one day a band of angry wrecked men marched on the abbey, and in spite of the monks' prayers, pulled down the tower, some carved stones of which, green with damp, are still to be found hidden under the long rank grass of the churchyard.

Further west the crow comes to Padstow (Petrock's tower), a high-flavoured old fishing town a mile from the sea. Athelstan, when he conquered Cornwall and Scilly, and pricked the Britons back westward with his Saxon sword, gave the place his name, but it never adhered, and the Britons soon fell back on their favourite, Saint Petrock. Padstow must have been a place of some importance in the middle ages, for, when Liverpool was still unborn, this little Cornish sea-port sent two high-sterned turreted vessels, to aid Edward the Third and his knights at the siege of Calais. It first declined in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when the harbour began to block, and that Dunbar, now so dangerous, to form, against which shoal vessels, hurrying in for shelter to the *only* place of refuge on that terrible northern coast of Cornwall, are often driven by eddies that surge inside the point of the Camel estuary. These sands, rich in carbonate of lime (eighty per cent), are in consequence so invaluable as manure, that nearly one hundred thousand tons a year are carted away, so wisely has industry converted the sailors' burial-place into a mine of wealth. The east shore of the estuary, a barren waste of rolling sand hills, gives a wildness to Padstow in fine blue sky weather, but in dull grey days the "towans" glow with a delusive appearance of changeless sunshine—with such enchantments can imagination invest even a desert. The devastating sand cast down here, as if from all the hour-glasses Time has ever shattered, has choked up and partly buried the ancient chapel of St. Enedoc (Sin Kennedy) situated under the east side of the barren eminence of Bray Hill, north of Padstow, and at the opposite side of the harbour. The sand, piled up to the roof, and scooped away to free the door, has made a small Cornish Pompeii of it. On the north-east side of this desert churchyard a corroded tombstone of 1687 (James the Second), rises from the yellow sea sand. This half buried church was built in 1430 (Henry the Sixth), to replace an ancient oratory of one of those self-devoted Welsh or Irish saints, who were the earliest missionaries among the Pagan tin-miners; traces of it were visible at Bray Hill, some fifty years ago, during a temporary shifting of the sand. St. Enedoc's shows nothing above the surface but a little

crooked spire of slate stone blackened by the salt spray, and yellow with blotches of lichen. The old carved seats in the interior were worm-eaten centuries ago. Streaks of scarlet and gold still linger on the panels of the roof. The front is Norman, with a rude cable moulding. There is service once a fortnight in this wild place, where the sea choruses the anthem, and the wind howls its savage responses. Mrs. Candour, that indefatigable gossiping friend of Mrs. Grundy, says that some years ago, before the grass had chained down the volatile and restless sand, a certain clergyman, full of zeal to save his fees, was in the habit of descending into the pulpit through the opening of a skylight. The conquering sand of Padstow has been, however, generally strongly opposed to the establishment, for St. Michael's, on the western shore, between Wadebridge and St. Enedoc, has equally suffered; and on the opposite side of the estuary, near Trevose Head (half way between Hartland and St. Ives), the old church of St. Constantine has been almost entirely engulfed, and the old annual festival, with its limpet and star-gazy pies and hurling matches, has, therefore, for some years been discontinued. The local legend at Padstow is that the bar was the result of the curse of a mermaid, who was shot at whilst sporting in the sea by a devil-may-care young fellow who was looking for gulls. She cursed the town as she sank on her way to a submarine hospital. The old men still say, "A harbour of refuge here would be a great blessing, but nothing will keep the sand out or make the water deep enough to swim a frigate, unless the parsons find out the way to take up the mermaid's curse." St. Petrock's—the fine "late decorated" church of Padstow, with its slender pillars, its rich coloured windows, and strong timbered roofs, is built of grey Caraclew stone, but looks as cold and chilly as if it had been paralysed by the Atlantic storms. The old font, with the Twelve Apostles sentinelled round it, had once the miraculous power (according to the belief of the superstitious inhabitants of this wild country) of preserving all those who were baptised in it from painful experiences of the gallows.

The charm was broken and the saints' blessing lost for ever some fifty years or so ago, when a Padstow man, named Elliot, robbed the mail, and was duly hung. Honesty has since that been found to be a better security against peculiar complaints of the throat, than even St. Petrock's font.

In the old house of the Prideaux (1600)—on high wooded ground above Padstow, where once St. Petrock's monastery stood till the Danes burnt it in 981—there are numerous pictures of that clever self-taught Truro artist Opie, or Oppy, as he called himself. He painted all the Prideaux, male and female, all their servants, and even all the family cats. Opie, the son of a Truro carpenter, was discovered by Peter Pindar smearing out portraits with splashes of house paint. He came to London,

aided by Lord Bateman and Dr. Wolcott, in 1777, and helped to illustrate Boydell's Shakespeare. Fashion soon deserted him when it found the rough Cornish man did not flatter, so he took to historical painting, executed several broad vigorous works, and died in 1807. Family picture galleries are like Noah's Ark—they contain strangely contrasted couples; as, for instance, here—Dean Prideaux and the Duchess of Cleveland; Jupiter and Europa and the Madonna and Child.

## MORE OF WILLS AND WILL MAKING.

JEMMY WOOD AND HIS WILL.

ABOUT thirty-three years ago there was still alive, in the city of Gloucester, a very singular Mr. Wood, who was regarded there with a mixture of pride, contempt, and derision. Though this gentleman was of good family, being of "the old Brockthorp stock," which must be accepted on local authority as a good one, he was keeping a poor shop, and kept it until the day of his death. Here he attended himself, and would supply any article in the chandler's way, from a mouse-trap to a ship's anchor. Not that he kept such articles in stock, but his name was so good, his credit so strong, that he would take an order for fitting out a ship, and complete it by ordering the supplies from other merchants. There was nothing to excite derision in such proceedings. But in one corner of the shop was a little dark office, where he himself sat, with two clerks, and did business. The name of this corner was the "Old Gloucester Bank," admitted to be the oldest private establishment of the kind in the kingdom, with perhaps the exception of Child's well-known house. This in itself was an oddity—the huckstering shop and bank combined. It was more remarkable still that in that corner had been built up a fortune, which was said to make its owner the richest commoner in England.

He was of course watched, and his proceedings noted and talked of. He used to exhibit the most characteristic trait that has yet been recorded of misers—taking a ride upon a *hearse*, on its return journey, to avoid coach hire. The grand speculation was, what would "old Jemmy Wood" do with his money? He had no relatives to speak of, beyond some second cousins; his two sisters were dead. Would he leave it to charities? Scarcely; for it was repeated with satisfaction how he had been used to quote his father's advice: "James, don't thee leave thy money to charity; it only makes so many rogues." An officious neighbour suggested an alms-house, adding, "it would immortalise him, and do good," but received for answer a pleasant chuckle, with rubbing of hands and the old speech, "Ay, ay, and make rogues." He was an alderman, but the stupid corporation would insult him when he came to their meetings, and play practical jokes on him. They were heavily in debt, and he had been heard to say he would do something for "poor old Gloucester;" but here

they only acted according to the usual corporation lights. His ways were noted. It was remarked that every Sunday he devoted to a long and solitary walk. He was not what is technically called a miser, and did not pick up old hats in the street, or deny himself food. He would give nothing in charity. He would acknowledge no relations, but, with a common shape of pride, had taken a fancy to a gentleman of the same name, whose proceedings in connexion with the Queen's trial had attracted attention—namely, "Mr. Alderman Wood, M.P., of London." There was no relationship between them, but he no doubt chose to assume there was, and the tribe of local Woods were at times not a little disquieted by this partiality. A female relation of the miser's, although unknown to the alderman, had written to him in admiration of his behaviour in relation to the Queen. At her death she left him some property, and the alderman came down to attend her funeral. This lucky tribute of respect brought him the acquaintance of her kinsman, who conceived great admiration and respect for him, gave him a house at Hatherley rent free, and wrote to Lord John Russell begging the commission of the peace for "his esteemed friend." The local folks were more and more alarmed at this intimacy, and one disinterestedly warned him: "I understand Alderman Wood has been paying you great attention. I hope you won't be imposed upon;" on which the other winked and chuckled and rubbed his hands, to hint that he knew what he was about.

No one was watching him with greater interest than a certain artful solicitor of the name of Chadborn. This gentleman managed all his business for him, as the miser believed, on the most disinterested terms. Chadborn, he said, never charged him anything save costs out of pocket, but all the while the attorney was secretly registering attendances and services of all kinds.

Mr. Chadborn soon grew to have great influence. It was reported about that the old miser had said to tenants asking for long leases, "His Honour would take care of them." That "in good time all would come to His Honour;" and this strange title of respect, recalling Sir Giles's humour in the play, he seemed to roll out with satisfaction. His Honour, with great skill, too, instead of setting himself against Mr. Alderman Wood, prudently associated that functionary in his own interests.

At last, as old Jemmy Wood was now getting on towards eighty, efforts were made to get him to make a will, and it was soon known that this had been happily accomplished. One morning in April, Alderman Wood of London received a pressing letter from one of the clerks to the effect that the old man was poorly, could not dress himself, and begged of him to come down at once. The alderman flung himself into the mail, travelled all night, and arrived to find his friend down-stairs in his bank. But the end was at hand. Jemmy Wood was carried up in a chair to bed, and

died on the 20th of April. Chadborn arrived just in time, on that very day.

Then, indeed, curiosity and speculation were at their height. The town was on the tiptoe of expectation. But soon it was known that he had died leaving about a million in the stocks. An old bureau stood in the lobby, facing his room door, and from this was brought down a sealed envelope, which was solemnly opened in presence of the London alderman, Mr. Chadborn, and the two clerks. It was found to contain a will bequeathing all his property to these four gentlemen as executors, subject to debts and legacies. The former were little, and of the latter there were none. It gave them nearly a quarter of a million apiece. The fortunate alderman returned to London, and not an hour was lost in taking out probate. In fact, the proctor received instructions almost on the day of the decease. A kind of feeble caveat was entered, which was supported with such indecision that the probate was all but granted. It seemed to be put forward in the hope of something turning up. Long after, the judge stated that probate must have been granted, but for a mysterious occurrence.

One of the disappointed had been a Mr. Helps of Cheapside; and one morning in June the threepenny post brought him a letter and an enclosure. The letter was in pencil.

"The enclosed is a paper saved out of many burned by parties I could hang: they pretend it is not Wood's hand; many swear to it: they want to swindle me: let the rest know."

The enclosure was a piece of paper scorched at one corner, and torn right across the name signed to it. It ran:

"In a codicil to my will I give the corporation of Gloucester one hundred and forty thousand pounds. In this I wish my executors would give sixty thousand pounds to them for the same purpose as I have before named. I would also give to my friend Mr. Phillpotts fifty thousand pounds, to Mr. George Connell ten thousand pounds, to Mr. John Thomas Helps, Cheapside, London, thirty thousand pounds, to Mrs. Goodlake, mother of Mr. Surman, and to Thomas Wood, Smith-street, Chelsea, each twenty thousand pounds, and Samuel Wood fourteen thousand pounds, and the latter gentleman's family six thousand pounds; and I confirm all other bequests, and give the rest of my property to the executors for their own interest.

"JAMES WOOD.

"Gloucester City Old Bank,  
July, 1835."

The recipient of this strange communication, which seemed thus to drop from the clouds, was a connexion of the deceased. It seemed almost too apropos—too much after the pattern of the finding of a lost paper in a melodrama. But it was at once placed in proper hands, and then business really began. The Court of Probate stayed its hand; real substantial claimants rushed to the front, and the decks were cleared for the fray. The fund would

most probably have to furnish costs; so the best lawyers were engaged, and what was to be a five years' battle began.

Even with regard to the old will, some local rumours were beginning to get abroad. This instrument, when produced to the court, appeared to be a sort of compound document, consisting of two papers carefully wafered together. The first was instructions for a will, named the four executors, was in Chadborn's handwriting, and was duly signed by "Jemmy Wood." But there were no signatures of witnesses, so taken by itself it was worth nothing. The other paper was duly signed and attested, and gave all his property to his executors, subject to certain legacies and dispositions he should hereafter make. But the executors were not named. Thus each paper was deficient; the first wanted legal force, the second was "uncertain," as it *named* no one. Still each supplied the other's imperfection, and taken together they seemed to make a good will. The wafering together showed that such was the testator's intention.

But now it was said in Gloucester that only one paper had been put away in the bureau, and that when the will was produced, after the old man's death, there had been only a single sheet taken out of the bureau. To the amazement of the court the executors now admitted that such was the case, and Mr. Chadborn owned that he had gone home for the first paper, the "instructions," had wafered the two together, and placing them in the envelope, had sealed it up with Mr. Wood's own seal, which happened to be lying there "accidentally," he said. The envelope was then placed in the bureau.

Of this questionable transaction the four executors seemed to have all more or less knowledge. In their statement they declared what was the perfect truth, though not the whole truth—that the two papers when taken out of the envelope were together, which indeed they were, on the last occasion. In the two being *attached* together consisted the whole force of the will. Separate, even in two distinct drawers of the same bureau, and the executors lost their prize. It was too tempting.

Still it might be said this was a mere technical device; and as the intentions of the testator were manifest, it would be hard that they should be frustrated by an accident of this nature. Flesh and blood could hardly stand being defrauded of a million sterling, when a couple of wafers was all that was wanting to secure it, and when it was conceded that they, and no others, were the executors meant.

But the newly-found codicil pointed at some other matters. It spoke of a regular will, in which the Gloucester corporation received one hundred and forty thousand pounds, and which, taken with the second paper, made everything clear. But where was this will?

The fatuous corporation, who had made game of the testator during his life, and played their stupid jests on him, now became keenly alive to their own interests. A notice appeared

offering a substantial reward for news of it, with a reward to the sender of the codicil, if he came forward. Fresh stories, too, came up from Gloucester. It was rumoured that Mr. Chadborn and a companion had been seen, just after the death, busy tearing up and burning papers in the testator's room. This was duly charged, and, strange to say, admitted. They were unimportant papers—old lottery-tickets, &c. On being pressed, it was owned that one of these papers was a sort of power of attorney to Chadborn, which, as it was now useless, he thought it better to destroy.

Then the case began to drag itself slowly through the court. It exhibited some highly characteristic instances of human subtlety and nice reasoning. No less than six-and-thirty witnesses were brought forward for the executors, to prove his hatred of the corporation of Gloucester, and his dislike of charities. Nearly all these were shown the codicil, and were almost positive as to its being a forgery. Their reasons found a valuable commentary on the fallibility of such a test. He always wrote "exors" in a peculiar way; Mr. Counsel's name was spelled "Council;" and he had been heard again and again to caution clerks and others against writing amounts in figures, as they could be altered. Yet all these vast sums were in figures. But a little industry in searching his papers, showed precedents for all these points, spelling being one of his weak points, and "Lien in Hospital" being found in his handwriting for Lying-in Hospital. Such tests are fallacious, as assuming human nature to be consistent always; and as Lord Lyndhurst acutely remarked, a forger would have taken care to write the amounts in words, not in figures, knowing this peculiarity. Though here again an ingenious advocate might retort that a more clever forger still would refine on this, and would have written in figures, because it would be said that a forger *would* have taken care to know his peculiarity. An instance of the speciousness of human testimony arose in the case. A Mr. Smith declared that only a few years before, he had seen a will of Jemmy Wood's, in which he had left twenty thousand pounds to an hospital, on the strange condition that the money was not to be paid until the hospital was built. This seemed particular enough; the witness was very positive, and they seemed to be on the track of something. But a sort of letter-book turned up, in which this very will was found, in Smith's writing, but it was a will he had drawn for a Mr. Chetwynd.

It was curious that all the thirty-six witnesses should have such a strong opinion against the codicil. The supporters of the latter were

lucky enough to find five-and-twenty to swear positively to the writing. They gave the usual reasons, a particular flourish here, a straight stroke there. They went through in regulation cross-examination. Look at that trembling down-stroke in the letter D, now look at this D— are the two alike?

At last, it came to decision before Sir Herbert Fust Jenner, who reviewed the whole case in what was called "an elaborate judgment." He went through all the evidence, and finally decided that he could not act upon the codicil, which had nothing to support it, and had come into being in too suspicious a manner. This decision of course affected no one, costs came out of the fund, and both parties must have appealed whatever way it had been decided. It was then taken to the Privy Council, and in 1841 Lord Lyndhurst gave what was no doubt the correct judgment, reversing that of the lower court, and thus diminishing the gains of the executors by about a quarter of a million. It was all but certain that a will had been destroyed. Most probably what had taken place was this. Chadborn returning home, and searching among his papers had found various codicils and wills, which had virtually reduced what was to come to the executors to some insignificant sum. These he found referred to each other, and were so connected that he could not destroy one without destroying all; on the other hand, by destroying them he destroyed the names of the executors, a loss he could only supply by the device of wafering on the old "instructions." The codicil he no doubt thought he had torn and burnt with the rest. Who saved that codicil? Who wrote that most dramatic note? Why did the writer conceal himself? What risk would he run by coming forward? Why was he not tempted by the handsome reward of the corporation? Had he no spirit of revenge if he had been defrauded of a legacy? Was it some spying servant, prowling about that irregular house when the ransacking and burning the papers was going on, and had he found it under the grate just scorched? Or was it some more important person in the drama, some one struck with alarm at the magnitude of the deed, or perhaps conscience stricken, and wishing to leave it to fortune to make reparation—but who dare not appear? *Was it Chadborn himself?*

#### MR. CHARLES DICKENS'S FAREWELL READINGS.

MR. CHARLES DICKENS will read on Thursday, April 8, and Friday, April 9, at Liverpool; Tuesday, April 13, 27, May 11, and 25, St. James's Hall, London. All communications to be addressed to MESSRS. CHAPPEL AND Co., 50, New Bond-street, London, W.

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